



Project Focus – Pastures L.L.C.

The Pastures L.L.C. Wetlands Reserve Program Prairie Restoration Project is located in Vermilion Parish in south Louisiana. The significance in Gulf Coast tallgrass prairie lies in the fact that once there was over 2.5 million acres existing in southwest Louisiana. Today, there is less than 100 acres of this declining habitat remaining across the state.

It is nearly impossible to evaluate the ecological ramifications of the loss of this habitat on wildlife. Through this Prairie Restoration Project, the NRCS, landowner and "Partners" will begin restoring the habitat functions and values on approximately 130 acres of seasonal wetlands, re-creating the site's former topographic features, and the native prairie plant community on 110 acres. This effort is one of the first steps of restoring this precious habitat in the State of Louisiana.

"For the last two years now, we have been discussing the project with USDA/NRCS, and we have been looking forward to this time when the volunteer activity begins," said Delores and Al Dietz, landowners. We and our friends in Gueydan, Louisiana are anxious to see the plant communities and wildlife the project will support. We are told that visitors from around the world will come to Gueydan to see the prairie restoration project and we are glad to return this gift to the community."

Louisiana Summary

Overview

Through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), NRCS and private landowners are restoring marginal bottomland hardwood forested wetlands in Louisiana. The Louisiana State NRCS, in cooperation with participating landowners and our "Partners", are focusing on restoring the former hydrology and native plant communities on all WRP projects.

Accomplishments

Louisiana continues to lead the nation in the total number of acres enrolled in WRP. Currently, Louisiana has 370 easements that have been enrolled into the program. Louisiana's easement projects total 140,098 acres, of which 120,000 acres have been restored to wetland habitat. In fiscal year 2002, Louisiana made offers on 56 applications for a total funding allocation of \$19,500,000. Once the easements are recorded, there will be an additional 19,449 acres available for bottomland hardwood forested wetland restoration.

Outlook

The Wetlands Reserve Program continues to be a very popular option for landowners in the Louisiana. The Natural Resources Conservation Service receives between 15 to 30 new applications per month. We currently have 730 unfunded applications on our waiting list representing a total of 182,718 acres.

State Contacts

Ronald J. Marcantel, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, USDA NRCS WRP Program Manager, (318) 473-7802, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, (ron.marcantel@la.usda.gov)

Jeff Combs, Biologist/Programs Specialist, (318) 473-7740, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, (jeffrey.combs@la.usda.gov)

"With so much emphasis on vanishing ecosystems, such as coral reefs and tropical rainforests, its ironic that the most endangered ecosystem in North America has gone largely unnoticed. The 110-acre coastal prairie restoration being conducted in Gueydan, Louisiana, through the federal Wetlands Reserve Program, will play a critical roll in conserving this amazingly diverse and culturally important ecosystem".

Larry Allain
National Wetlands Research Center
Lafayette, Louisiana

Louisiana Dollars and Contracts

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2002			Cumulative Total (1995 – 2002)		
	Number of Contracts	Contract Acres	Contract Amounts	Number of Contracts	Contract Acres	Contract Amounts
District 4	5	1,995	\$1,687,634	46	16,487	\$11,177,855
District 5	40	13,330	\$13,936,971	350	131,586	\$101,030,665
District 6	3	620	\$721,599	9	1,643	\$1,488,232
District 7	5	3,039	\$3,119,445	25	10,342	\$8,704,956
State Totals	53	18,984	\$19,465,649	430	160,058	\$122,401,708

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.